
Novena of the Holy Spirit

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By:

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Meditations for Each Day of the Novena

(Beginning with the Feast of the Ascension)

(NOTE: This Novena can be prayed throughout the year)

THE NOVENA of the Holy Spirit is the chief of all novenas because it was the first that was ever celebrated. The Apostles and Our Blessed Mother celebrated this novena in the upper room. It was distinguished by so many remarkable wonders and gifts, principally by the gift of the same Holy Spirit, a gift merited for us by the Passion of Jesus Christ.

Jesus made this known to us when he told his disciples that if he did not die, he could not send us the Holy Spirit.

"If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7).

We know well by faith that the Holy Spirit is the love that the Father and the Eternal Word bear one to the other. Therefore, the gift of love (which the Lord infuses into our souls and is the greatest of all gifts) is particularly attributed to the Holy Spirit.

Saint Paul says, "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who is given to us" (Rom.5:5).

In this novena, therefore, we must consider, above all, the great value of divine love, so we may desire to obtain it and endeavor by devout exercises, and especially by prayer, to be made partakers of it, since God has promised it to him who asks for it with humility.

"Your Father from Heaven [will] give the Good Spirit to them that ask him!" (Luke 11:13).

Meditation 1. Love is a Fire that Inflames the Heart

GOD HAD ORDERED, in the ancient law, that there should be a fire kept continually burning on his altar.

“The fire on the altar shall always burn” (Lev. 6:12).

Saint Gregory says the altars of God are our hearts, where He desires that the fire of His divine love should always be burning. Therefore, the Eternal Father, not satisfied with having given us His Son, Jesus Christ, to save us by His death, would also give us the Holy Spirit, that He might dwell in our souls and keep them constantly on fire with love.

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Jesus himself declared that he had come into the world on purpose to inflame our hearts with this holy fire, and that he desired nothing more than to see it kindled: “I am come to cast fire on the earth: and what will 1, but that it be kindled?” (Luke 12:49). Forgetting, therefore, the injuries and ingratitude he received from men on this earth, when he had ascended into heaven he sent down upon us the Holy Spirit.

Oh, most loving Redeemer, thou dost, then, love us as well in thy sufferings and ignominies as in thy kingdom of glory! This is why the Holy Spirit chose to appear in the upper room under the form of tongues of fire: “And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire” (Acts 2:3). And therefore the Church teaches us to pray: “May the Holy Spirit, we beseech thee, O Lord, inflame us with that fire which our Jesus Christ came to cast upon the earth, and which he ardently desired should be enkindled.”

This was the holy fire which has inflamed the saints to do such great things for God, to love their enemies, to desire contempt, to deprive themselves of all earthly goods, and to embrace with delight even torments and death. Love cannot remain idle and never says, “This is enough.” The soul that loves God, the more she does for her beloved the more she desires to do, in order to please him and to attract to herself his affections. This holy fire is enkindled by mental prayer. If, therefore, we desire to burn with love for God, let us love prayer; that is the blessed furnace in which this divine ardour is

enkindled.



Affections and Prayers

O my God, up to now I have done nothing for Thee Who hast done so much for me. My coldness could well make Thee cast me away from Thee. But, O Holy Spirit, make warm what is cold. Deliver me from my lack of fervour and make me burn with the desire to please Thee. I now wish to deny all that pleases me. I would rather die than displease Thee in the least thing. To Thee Who hast appeared in the form of fiery tongues, I consecrate my tongue that it may not offend Thee again. Thou didst give it to me to praise Thee, but I, I have used it to injure Thee and cause others to offend Thee. I am sorry for my sins. For the love of Jesus Christ Who honoured Thee so much by His tongue when He walked this earth, grant that henceforward I may honour Thee by praising Thee, by asking often for Thy help and by speaking of Thy goodness and the infinite love Thou deservest.

I love Thee, my supreme Good, I love Thee, O loving God.

O Mary, most beloved Spouse of the Holy Spirit, obtain for me this holy fire.

Meditation 2. Love is a Light that Enlightens the Soul

ONE of the greatest evils which the sin of Adam has produced in us is that darkening of our reason by means of the passions which cloud our mind. Oh, how miserable is that soul which allows itself to be ruled by any passion! Passion is, as it were, a vapour, a veil which prevents our seeing the truth. How can he fly from evil who does not know what is evil?

Besides, this darkness increases in proportion as our sins increase. But the Holy Spirit, who is called "most blessed light," is he who not only inflames our hearts to love him through his divine splendour but also dispels our darkness and shows us the vanity of earthly things, the value of eternal goods, the importance of salvation, the worth of grace, the goodness of God, the infinite love which he deserves and the immense love which he bears us. "The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 2:14).

A man who is absorbed in the pleasures of the world knows little of these truths and therefore, unfortunate that he is, loves what he ought to hate and hates what he ought to love. Saint Mary Magdalene of Pazzi exclaimed: "Oh, love not known! Oh, love not loved!" And Saint Teresa said that God is not loved because he is not known. Therefore the saints were always seeking light from God: "Send forth thy light; illuminate my darkness; open thou my eyes." Yes, because without light we cannot avoid precipices nor find God.

Affections and Prayers

Holy and Divine Spirit, I believe that Thou art true God, yet one God with the Father and the Son. I adore Thee and acknowledge Thee as the Giver of those lights which make me know the evil I have done in offending Thee and the obligation I have to love Thee. I thank Thee for these lights. I am sorry for having offended Thee.

I have deserved to be left in darkness, but I see that I am not yet abandoned by Thee. Continue, O eternal Spirit, to enlighten my mind. Make me know still more Thy infinite goodness. Give me strength now to love Thee with all my heart. Add grace upon grace so that I may be gently drawn to Thee and compelled to love none but Thee. I ask for this grace through the merits of Jesus Christ.

I love Thee, infinite Goodness, I love Thee more than myself. I will be all Thine. Accept me and do not permit me to be separated from Thee again. O my Mother, Mary, help me always by thy intercession.

Meditation 3. Love is a Fountain that Satisfies

LOVE is also called "a living fountain, fire, and charity." Our blessed Redeemer said to the Samaritan woman: "He that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever" (John 4:13). Love is the water which satisfies our thirst; he who loves God really with his whole heart neither seeks nor desires anything else, because in God he finds every good.

Therefore, satisfied with God, he often joyfully exclaims, "My God and my all!" My God, thou art my whole good. But the Almighty complains that many souls go about seeking for fleeting and miserable pleasures from creatures and leave him, who is the infinite good and fountain of all joy: "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have dug to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13).

Therefore God, who loves us and desires to see us happy, cries out and makes known to all: "If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink" (John 7:37). He who desires to be happy, let him come to me; and I will give him the Holy Spirit, who will make him blessed both in this life and the next. "He that believeth in me" (He goes on to say), "as the scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). He, therefore, who believes in Jesus Christ and loves him shall be enriched with so much grace that from his heart (the heart, that is the will, is the belly of the soul) shall flow many fountains of holy virtues, which shall not only serve to preserve his own life, but also to give life to others.

And this water is the Holy Spirit, the substantial love which Jesus Christ promised to send us from heaven after his ascension: "Now this he said of the Spirit which they should receive, who believed in him: for as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). The key which opens the channels of this blessed water is holy prayer, which obtains every good for us in virtue of the promise, "Ask, and you shall receive." We are blind, poor, and weak; but prayer obtains for us light, strength, and abundance of grace. Theodoret said: "Prayer, though but one, can do all things." He who prays receives all he wants. God desires to give us his graces; but he will have us pray for them.

Affections and Prayers

Lord, “give me this water.” Yes, Lord Jesus, I will say to Thee like the Samaritan woman: give me this water of divine love that I may turn away from this world and live only for Thee Who art so lovely. “Water that which is dry.” My soul is like a dry land where nothing but the briars and thorns of sin grow. Ah! give me, before I pass out of this world, an outpouring of divine grace to make my soul fruitful in works worthy of Thy heavenly glory.

O Fountain of living water, O supreme Good, too often have I left Thee for the corrupt waters of this earth which have deprived me of Thy love. Why did not death overtake me before I offended Thee?

In the future I will seek nothing but Thee, O my God. Assist me and grant that I may be faithful to Thee. Mary, my hope, keep me ever under they protection.

Meditation 4. Love is a Dew that Fertilizes

THUS does Holy Church teach us to pray: "May the infusion of the Holy Spirit cleanse our hearts, and fertilize them by the interior sprinkling of his dew." Love fertilizes the good desires, the holy purposes, and the good works of our souls: these are the flowers and fruits which the grace of the Holy Spirit produces. Love is called dew, because it cools the heart of bad passions and of temptations. Therefore the Holy Spirit is called refreshment and pleasing coolness in the heat. This dew descends into our hearts in time of prayer.

A quarter of an hour's prayer is sufficient to appease every passion of hatred or of inordinate love, however ardent it may be: "He brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me" (Cant. 2: 4). Holy meditation is the cellar where love is set in order, so that we love our neighbour as ourselves and God above everything. He who loves God loves prayer. He who does not love prayer will find it morally impossible to overcome his passions.

Affections and Prayers

O holy and Divine Spirit, I will no longer live to myself. I will spend the remaining days of my life in loving and pleasing Thee. For that purpose I beseech Thee to grant me the gift of prayer. Come into my heart and teach me how to pray as I ought. Give me strength not to neglect prayer when my soul is weary and dry before Thee. Give me the spirit of prayer, that is, the grace to pray always and to say those prayers that are most agreeable to Thy divine Heart.

My sins have endangered my salvation, but I understand from so many kindnesses in my regard that Thou wishest me to be saved and to become a saint. I will become a saint to please Thee. I love Thee, O supreme Good, O my Love and my All. I give myself wholly to Thee.

O Mary, my hope, protect me.

Meditation 5. Love is a Repose that Refreshes

LOVE is also called "in labour rest, in mourning comfort." Love is repose that refreshes, because the principal office of love is to unite the will of the lover to that of the beloved one. To a soul that loves God, in every affront it receives, in every sorrow it endures, in every loss which happens to it, the knowledge that it is the will of its beloved for it to suffer these trials is enough to comfort it. It finds peace and contentment in all tribulations merely by saying, This is the will of my God. This is that peace which surpasses all the pleasures of sense, "the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7). Saint Mary Magdalene of Pazzi merely by saying "The will of God" was always filled with joy.

In this life everyone must carry his cross. But as Saint Teresa says, the cross is heavy for him who drags it, not for him who embraces it. Thus our Lord knows well how to strike and how to heal: "He woundeth, and cureth" as Job said (5:18). The Holy Spirit, by his sweet unction, renders even ignominies and torments sweet and pleasant: "Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11:26). Thus ought we to say in all adversities that happen to us: "So be it done, Lord, because so hath it pleased thee." And when the fear of any temporal evil that may befall us alarms us, let us always say: "Do what thou wilt, my God; whatever thou dost, I accept it all." And it is a very good thing to offer oneself thus constantly during the day to God, as Saint Teresa did.

Affections and Prayers

O my God, how often have I opposed and despised Thy will to do my own. I am sorry for this evil more than for any other. Henceforward, O Lord, I will love Thee with all my heart. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Make me know what Thou wouldst have me do and I will do it all. I will always desire and love nothing but Thy will.

O Holy Spirit, help my weakness. Thou art goodness itself: how can I love anything but Thee? Ah! may Thy holy love draw my whole heart to Thee! I leave all things to give myself entirely to Thee. Accept me and help me.

O my Mother Mary, I trust in thee.

Meditation 6. Love is the Virtue that Gives Us Strength

"LOVE is strong as death" (Cant. 8:6). As there is no created strength which can resist death, so there is no difficulty for a loving soul which love cannot overcome. When there is a question of pleasing its beloved, love conquers all, losses, contempt, and sorrow. "Nothing is so hard, but that the fire of love can conquer it." This is the most certain mark with which to know if a soul really loves God, if it is as faithful in love when things are adverse as when they are prosperous. Saint Francis de Sales said that "God is quite as amiable when he chastises as when he consoles us, because he does all for love."

Indeed, when he strikes us most in this life, then it is that he loves us most. Saint John Chrysostom esteemed Saint Paul in chains more fortunate than Saint Paul caught up into the third heaven. Hence the holy martyrs in the midst of their torments rejoiced and thanked the Lord, as for the greatest favour that could fall to their lot, that of having to suffer for his love. And other saints, where there were no tyrants to afflict them, became their own executioners by the penances which they inflicted upon themselves in order to please God. Saint Augustine says that "For that which men love, either no labour is felt, or the labour itself is loved."

Affections and Prayers

O God of my soul, I pretend to love Thee, and yet I do nothing for Thy love. Would it not be a sign that I love Thee not, or very little ? But send me the Holy Spirit, O Jesus, the Holy Spirit Who will give me strength to suffer for Thy love and do something for Thee before I die. I pray Thee, O my beloved Redeemer, let me not die now, cold and ungrateful to Thee as I have been. Though I have committed so many sins for which I should be in hell, grant me the courage to love suffering, to do something for Thee.

O my God, Whose nature is all goodness and love, Thou desirest to be the guest of my soul from which l have so often driven thee. Oh! come and dwell in it: be Thou its Master and make it all Thine.

I love Thee, O my Lord, but if I love Thee Thou art already with me, since Saint John assures us that "he who abides in love abides in God and God in him," Thou art within me then, O my God. Make my love more ardent still.

Bind me with stronger chains that I may desire, seek and love nothing but Thee. Let me never be separated from Thy love.

I desire to be all Thine, O my Jesus.

O Mary, my Queen and Advocate, obtain for me love and perserverance.

Meditation 7. Love Causes God to Dwell in Our Souls

THE HOLY SPIRIT is called "Sweet Guest of the soul." This was the great promise made by Jesus Christ to those who love him, when he said: "If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you forever. The Spirit of truth . . . shall abide with you, and shall be in you" (John 14: 5-17). For the Holy Spirit never forsakes a soul if He is not driven away from it; he does not forsake, unless he be first forsaken.

God, then, dwells in a soul that loves him. But he declares that he is not satisfied if we do not love him with our whole heart. Saint Augustine tells us that the Roman Senate would not admit Jesus Christ into the number of their gods because they said that he was a proud god, who would have none other beloved but himself. And so it is. He will have no rivals in the heart that loves him; and when he sees that he is not the only object loved, he is jealous (so to speak).

Saint James writes of those creatures who divide up with him the heart which he desires to have all to himself: "Do you think that the scripture saith in vain: To envy doth the spirit covet which dwelleth in you" (James 4: 5). In short, as Saint Jerome says, Jesus is jealous, "Zelotypus est Jesus." Therefore the heavenly spouse praises that soul which, like the turtledove, lives in solitude and hidden from the world (Cant. 1: 9). Because he does not choose that the world should take a part of that love which he desires to have all to himself, therefore he also praises his spouse by calling her "a garden enclosed" (Cant. 4: 12), a garden closed against all earthly love. Do we doubt that Jesus deserves our whole love? "He gave himself wholly to you," says Saint John Chrysostom, "he left nothing for himself." He has given you all his blood and his life; there is nothing left to give.

Affections and Prayers

I understand, O my God, that Thou wantest me to be all Thine. Many times have I driven Thee from my soul, but Thou didst not shrink from returning to be united to me again. Ah! take possession of my entire self, for today I give myself wholly to Thee. Do Thou accept me, O Jesus, and do not permit that I should again live in the future, no, not even for a moment, without Thy love.

Thou seekest me and I seek none but Thee. Thou lovest me and I love Thee. Since Thou lovest me, bind me to Thyself that I may never abandon Thee.

O Mary, Queen of heaven, I trust in thee.

Meditation 8. Love is a Bond that Binds

AS THE HOLY SPIRIT, who is uncreated love, is the indissoluble bond which binds the Father to the eternal Word, so he also unites the soul with God. "Charity is a virtue," says Saint Augustine, "uniting us with God." Hence, full of joy, Saint Laurence Justinian exclaims: Love, your bond has such strength that it is able to bind even God and unite him to our souls. The bonds of the world are bonds of death; but the bonds of God are bonds of life and salvation (Ecclus.6:31), because the bonds of God by means of love unite us to God, who is our true and only life.

Before the coming of Jesus Christ, men fled from God and being attached to the earth refused to unite themselves to their Creator. But a loving God has drawn them to himself by the bonds of love as he promised through the prophet Osee: "I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love" (11: 4). These bands are the benefits, the lights, the calls to his love, the promises of paradise which he makes to us, the gift which he has bestowed upon us of Jesus Christ in the sacrifice of the cross and in the sacrament of the altar, and finally, the gift of his Holy Spirit.

Therefore the prophet exclaims, "Loose the bonds from off thy neck, O captive daughter of Sion" (Isa 52: 2). Oh my soul, you who are created for heaven, loose yourself from the bonds of earth, and unite yourself to God by the bonds of holy love: "Have charity, which is the bond of perfection" (Col 3: 14). Love is a bond which unites with herself all other virtues and makes the soul perfect. "Love, and do what thou wilt," said Saint Augustine. Love God, and do what you wish, because he who loves God tries to avoid causing any displeasure to his beloved and seeks in all things to please him.

Affections and Prayers

O my dear Jesus, Thou hast put me under a sweet obligation to love Thee, and how much it has cost Thee to win my love! I would be an ungrateful wretch if I loved Thee little after that, or if I let creatures share my heart with Thee Who hast given Thy life and Thy blood for me.

I wish to detach myself from everything and place all my affections in Thee alone. But I am weak and unable to realize this desire. Thou Who hast inspired it, help me to bring it into effect.

O my beloved Jesus, pierce my heart with the arrows of Thy love so that it may sigh ever after Thee and be melted in Thee! Thou alone I seek, Thou alone may I always seek. None but Thee may I desire and find!

My Jesus, I desire only Thee and nothing more. Grant that I may repeat it always during my life, and especially at the moment of my death: I desire only Thee and nothing more.

O my Mother Mary, from henceforward make me desire nothing but God.

Meditation 9. Love is a Treasure Containing Every Good

LOVE is that treasure of which the Gospel says that we must leave all to obtain it, because love makes us partakers of the friendship of God, "an infinite treasure to men! which they that use, become the friends of God" (Wis. 7:14). Oh man, says Saint Augustine, why, then, do you go about seeking for good things? Seek that one good alone in which all other good things are contained.

But we cannot find God, who is this sovereign good, if we do not forsake the things of the earth. Saint Teresa writes, "Detach your heart from creatures, and you will find God." He who finds God finds all that he can desire: "Delight in the Lord, and he will give thee the requests of thy heart" (Ps. 36: 4). The human heart is constantly seeking after good things that may make it happy; but if it seeks them from creatures, however much it may acquire, it will never be satisfied; if it seeks God alone, God will satisfy all its desires. Who are the happiest people in this world, if not the saints? And why? Because they desire and seek only God.

A tyrant offered gold and gems to Saint Clement, in order to persuade him to renounce Jesus Christ. The saint exclaimed with a sigh, "Is God to be put into competition with a little dirt? Blessed is he who knows this treasure of divine love, and strives to obtain it. He who obtains it will of his own accord divest himself of everything else, that he may have nothing else but God." "When the house is on fire," says Saint Francis de Sales, "all the goods are thrown out of the windows." And Father Paul Segneri the Younger, a great servant of God, used to say that love is a thief which robs us of all earthly affections, so that we can say, "And what else do I desire but thee alone, my Lord?"

Affections and Prayers

I have not lived for Thee in the past, O my God, but rather for myself and my own gratifications. I have accordingly turned my back upon Thee, my supreme good. But I take heart at these words of Jeremias: "The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him." He says then that Thou art all goodness for him who seeks Thee.

O my beloved Lord, I know well the evil I have done in going away from Thee and I am sorry for it with all my heart. I know the infinite treasure we find in Thee. I will profit by this light that Thou givest me. I leave all things and choose Thee for my only love.

My God, my love, my all, I love Thee, I sigh after Thee, I desire Thee. Come, O Holy Spirit, come and consume in me by Thy sacred fire every affection that is not for Thee. Make me all Thine and grant me the grace to overcome everything in order to please Thee.

O Mary, my Advocate and Mother, help me by thy prayers.

Novena Resolution

THE MORE we love God, the more holy we become. Saint Francis Borgia says it is prayer that introduces divine love into the human heart and mortification that withdraws the heart from the world and renders it capable of receiving this holy fire. The more there is of the world in the heart, the less room there is for holy love: “Wisdom is [not to be] found in the land of them that live in delights” (Job 28: 12-13). Hence the saints have always sought to mortify as much as possible their self-love and their senses. The saints are few, but we must live with the few if we will be saved with the few. Saint Bernard says, “That cannot be perfect which is not singular.” He who would lead a perfect life must lead a singular one.

But above all, in order to become saints, it is necessary to have the desire to be saints; we must have the desire and the resolution. Some are always desiring, but they never begin to put their hands to the work. “Of these irresolute souls,” says Saint Teresa, “the devil has no fear.” On the other hand, the saint said, “God is a friend of generous souls.”

The devil tries to make it appear to us as pride to think of doing great things for God. it would indeed be pride in us if we thought of doing them all by ourselves, trusting in our own strength; but it is not pride to resolve to become saints trusting in God and saying, “I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.” (Phil 4: 13). We must therefore be of good courage, make strong resolutions, and begin. Prayer can do everything. What we cannot do by our own strength, we can do easily with the help of God, who has promised to give us whatever we ask of him: “You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.” (Jn 15: 7).

Affections and Prayers

Sweet Redeemer of my soul, Thou desirest to be loved by me and Thou commandest me to love Thee with all my heart, and with all my heart I desire to love Thee, O my Jesus. I will even go so far as to say to Thee: O my God, such is the trust I have in Thy mercy that my sins do not inspire me with fear, since I hate and detest them above every other evil.

I know besides that Thou rememberest not the offences of one who repents and who loves Thee. Nay more, since I have offended Thee more than others, I wish to love Thee more than others.

O my Lord, Thou wantest me to be a saint and I wish to become one in order to please Thee. I love Thee, infinite Goodness. I give myself entirely to Thee. Thou art my one good, my only love. Do not turn me away, O my love. Make me all Thine. Do not permit me to displease Thee again. Grant that I may sacrifice myself entirely for Thee, as Thou hast sacrificed Thyself entirely for me.

Mary, most loving and beloved Spouse of the Holy Spirit, obtain for me love and faithfulness. Amen. Amen. Amen.



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